

### Discussion Questions

1. Michael Lewis suggests that when Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor came into the NFL, he changed the game -- thereby changing the perception and value of his counterpart, the left tackle. Can you think of examples in other fields, throughout history, in which someone or something has altered the rules of the "game" so dramatically?
2. Michael Lewis argues that the position of the left tackle evolved. What other objects, positions or people have been forced to evolve as a result of external forces?
3. When Michael Oher arrived at Briarcrest Christian, he had very little in the way of education. What in his life failed him the most? His mother? The educational system? Social services? Himself? What was the biggest obstacle to his success? What could have done differently in his childhood -- if anything -- to avoid the educational and social void in which he found himself?
4. Michael Oher, despite his poverty and homelessness, never joined a gang, nor did he get involved in criminal activity. Why? What stopped him from taking that path?
5. Before coming to Briarcrest, Michael Oher had no traditional support network, yet a number of people did help him out -- by letting him sleep on their floors, bringing him to Briarcrest Christian, allowing him to enroll in the school, etc. Why did they help him?
6. Leigh Anne Tuohy took Michael Oher in and embraced him as her son, despite his different background and race. Given similar circumstances, would you do the same?
7. Teachers at Briarcrest discovered that Michael Oher was not stupid, but rather had trouble learning in a classroom. What does that mean? What is the difference between stupid and ignorant? Are there any things that you find difficult learning in a "standard" environment?
8. What do you think of the fact that Michael Oher was allowed to take tests orally rather than written ones? Should schools make exceptions for students who have unique issues? Briarcrest Christian is a private school -- would a public school have the resources to operate as Briarcrest Christian did in Michael Oher's situation?
9. At Briarcrest, Michael Oher stood out because of his size and his unfamiliarity with the environment and social milieu. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt completely out of place or different? How did you adjust?
10. Michael Oher's success story was made possible, in part, because he had a talent for playing football. What if his talent had been for playing piano, or cooking, or building furniture? Would he still have been able to rise out of poverty? Why or why not? Do disadvantaged kids who are good at sports have more opportunities than kids who don't, and if yes, is that fair -- or just fortuitous?
11. The Tuohys were criticized by people who thought that they must have been using Michael Oher for some purpose. Were they? What was their motivation?

12. College football recruiters went to extreme measures to court Michael Oher. Do you think the recruiting process has gotten out of hand, or is it just the nature of the business? Are college athletes kings of a culture that idolizes them, or victims of a system that exploits them?
13. If you were Michael Oher, which college would you have chosen? Which recruiter's pitch did you find most impressive?
14. Michael Oher was adopted by a rich family and suddenly touted as one of the top football prospects in the country. Yet by all accounts, he remained grounded. What was most responsible for keeping him that way? What do you think his future holds?
15. Did this book affect any of your views on race, or football, or the educational system? What do you consider the central message of this book to be?
16. Did you see the movie adaptation of *The Blind Side*? What differences are there between the book and the movie? Did you like the changes?